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Kelly Thompson Chapter, Public Relations Student Society of America

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PR Perspectives

Kelly Thompson Chapter, PRSSA
Western Kentucky University

Spring 1985



PRSSA President Patti Loizzo (left), Treasurer Jane Massey and Vice President Mike Thomley were instrumental in adding one national and three district first place plaques to Western Kentucky's treasure trove in 1984-85.

Seniors mix experience and education

by Kevin Grangier

Public relations is used by almost every organization at Western, and PR students are often the ones in charge, adding experience to their education.

"Every organization on Western's campus uses public relations, whether it has a designated PR person or not. If you deal with students in any way, you use PR," Scott Vick said.

Vick, PR chairman for the University Center Board (UCB), is one of five outstanding seniors who have contributed to public relations through their involvement in campus organizations in 1984-85. Others are Jack Smith, president of Associated Student Government (ASG); Barbara Dunn, PR secretary for Inter-Hall Council (IHC); Kristen Reeder, Talisman editor; Paige Jones, Herald reporter and PRSSA secretary; and Sam Abell, editor of the freshman orientation newsletter and Spirit Master.

"Many other organizations are good; but UCB is the best when it comes to using PR on a large scale. You're always working on big productions," Vick said.

"You can be more inventive when you're working with a campus organization. Like most businesses, you always have a budget; you have to learn to work with what you can get. Being PR director for UCB has taught me not only how to delegate responsibility, but also funds."

Jack Smith also works with UCB, but as a voting board



Barbara Dunn works to prepare the Bowling Green Magazine for publication. Dunn worked as production manager for the magazine during the fall semester.

member for the Associate Student Government.

Smith, a public relations, speech and government major, said his PR major has helped him the most in ASG.

"PR has helped me deal with the press and write news releases. I have learned how to deal with people, how to motivate them and how to turn undesirable situations into desirable ones."

"PR gives you a new way to look at the world and teaches you how to work with people. It's one of the best majors, especially at Western," Smith said.

The senior from Prospect, Ky., added that PR has helped him communicate with the people that work with him.

"Inter-office communications would have been impossible without the knowledge of how to write memos," Smith said.

Smith said his PR major and ASG have helped him develop the skills he will need in politics.

"I want to go to law school and eventually get into politics. PR provides a potpourri of skills that I think will help me in law school and politics," Smith said.

Barbara Dunn, from Centerville, Ohio, was a four-year member of PRSSA, production manager for Bowling Green Magazine, PR director for IHC, and administrative assistant for Dr. Robert Blann. She knows about getting PR experience out of the classroom.

"The level of my public relations ability is due to PRSSA,"



Paige Jones, a senior, at work at the Herald in Garrett Conference Center. Working for the newspaper has given her a sense of independence," she said.

Dunn said. "Working with PRSSA has given me a chance to try out my knowledge on the other organizations I'm involved in. I've tried to make IHC look better to the student body, and PRSSA has let me do that on a professional level."

Dunn said that even though academics come before her social life, her calendar of outside activities is her "bible."

"I think it's important to keep up the grades, but there's learning besides book work. I think my involvement here on campus definitely helped me in landing a job," Dunn said. A December graduate, Dunn is employed by Shillito-Rikes, a Cincinnati-based department store chain.

Dunn said her work with IHC gave her a true feel for behind-the-scenes PR.

"I really didn't get a lot of glory for what I did, but as long as I enjoyed it, I felt like it was worth my time."

Dunn's advice to students is to take school one step further than the classroom or dormroom.

"Take what you've learned and put it to use; don't do it after you've been here three or four years. Don't do just what's

required of you--do as much as you're capable of doing," she added.

Kristen Reeder of Newberg, Ind., also advised students to get involved.

"Students need to show that they can get along with people, and the only way to do that is to get involved on campus," she said.

Reeder said joining PRSSA is a good way to get involved and to meet people.

"PRSSA is more than a resume filler if you have the time to put into it," Reeder said.

Reeder is a member of PRSSA and Talisman editor.

"Being editor has given me experience in organizing and time management, two of the most important traits anyone can have in PR," Reeder said.

Reeder added that these traits helped her in the agency where she worked this past summer.

"I loved working for an agency; it's fast-paced," Reeder said. She will continue her agency experience, having accepted a full-time position with Keller-Crescent of Evansville, Ind., effective June 1.

Paige Jones of Nashville, Tenn., is another PR major

who's interested in a fast-paced job.

"I don't want to work in a stuffy corporation, I want something more 'laid back'," the Herald reporter said.

"I don't think I could handle a job so confining," she said. "I might like to go agency; there's more diversity there."

Jones said that being a reporter has given her a sense of independence.

"I really feel that working on the Herald has benefitted me in more than just writing skills. I've learned to relate to people and to communicate more effectively. As a reporter, you put yourself in the public light, you open yourself to criticism, and you toughen up," Jones said.

She added that working for the newspaper helped her learn to work for people.

"You always have an editor above you. You learn to accept your faults and improve them."

Jones said that PR requires a lot of writing, so it is important to have good writing skills.



Scott Vick, PR Director for UCB, is one of five outstanding seniors who uses his public relations skills for the university.

Where are the alumni ?

Survey shows most happy with work and education

by Kimberly Blake
and Cindy Dickerson

They stretch from one end of the country to the other. They occupy positions in California, Washington D.C. and almost everywhere in between.

The alumni of the Kelly Thompson Chapter of PRSSA have gone their separate ways and are working in a variety of jobs, but a survey shows many have similar views.

"Effective communications, knowing where to go for information and presenting it to a targeted audience are essential skills for success in any position in any organization," Joan (Provost) Patrick said. Patrick is a 1979 graduate working as a marketing representative for IBM in Evansville, Ind.

Daniel Pelino, an account marketing representative for IBM also, in Evansville, Ind., said the public relations program at Western prepares a student for success in the business world.

"I believe the program promotes actual case studies and real life applications," he said. "I continually draw on my public relations educational experience in my current responsibilities."

Alumni jobs range from private business owners and directors to sales representatives for companies like Proctor and Gamble and IBM. Other alumni work as PR directors in health care, advertising agencies, the

hotel industry and non-profit and corporate organizations. Most said their experiences in PRSSA and on college publications helped them in their past and present jobs.

"Bowling Green Magazine, print design and layout and principles of advertising have been the courses that have helped me out the most; however, the best experience that I've obtained from WKU was through PRSSA," Mark Galvin said. Galvin, a 1984 graduate is a sales representative for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Others said journalism classes, Associated Student Government, Greek organizations, campus work and other campus groups helped them prepare for jobs.

"My background in journalism, photography and advertising at WKU has been invaluable to me in providing me with skills necessary to efficiently perform my job," Jamie Kimbrough, a 1978 graduate, said. Kimbrough is associate sports information director for the University of South Carolina.

Fewer than half said that they are working in the area of PR that they wanted to when they graduated. Even those who are not working in their intended fields said their experiences in college help them on the job.

"Although I'm not working in public relations, the background I received while obtaining both public relations and mass communications degrees has greatly benefitted me in achieving what I have in business and private endeavors," Brian Collins, a 1977 graduate, said. Collins is a traffic group manager for Proctor and Gamble, Cincinnati, Ohio.

More than half said their experiences in PR met their expectations.

"While there are restrictions in working in public relations for a non-profit organization, there are rewards when you produce a good promotional package," Winnie McConnell said. McConnell, a 1978 graduate, is the acting manager of community relations for the Louisville Free Public Library.

Jeanne Grant, a 1982 graduate, said the accuracy emphasized in PR classes helps her in design and the communications skills help her in sales presentations.

"I love the challenge the PR-sales skills require," she said. Grant is an account representative for Wallace Computer Services in Atlanta, Ga.

Some of the alumni would do things differently if they had the chance.

"If I were giving advice or had my college years to live



PRSSA's charter members have gone their separate ways since this 1975 dinner. From left to right, Brian Collins, chapter vice president; Dr. Robert Blann, chapter adviser; Rhea Smith, PRSA executive vice president. Far right, Hal Griffin, of South Central Bell, Louisville, professional adviser; and Steve Hunt, chapter president. Collins now works for Proctor and Gamble, Cincinnati. Hunt is corporate communications director, Farm Credit Banks of Louisville.

over, I would get at least a marketing minor and take some management courses," Sheila Buck Garrin said. Garrin, a 1979 graduate, is a marketing assistant for Williamson County Hospital in Franklin, Tenn.

"Western is well-known for its journalism department, even out in the Southwest," Molly Bogdan, a 1983 graduate, said. Bogdan works for General Stores, Inc., Albuquerque, N.M.

"The PR program is well-rounded and gives a wide variety of exposure to the entire field of public relations. I'm proud to be a WKU graduate," she added.

ALUMNI SURVEY...

(35 out of 130 responding)

Questions:

Working in intended field?	Yes	43 percent
	No	54 percent
	Undecided.....	3 percent

Experiences met expectations?	Yes	54 percent
	No	14 percent
	Undecided	32 percent

What has helped on the job?	PRSSA	43 percent
	College publications	29 percent

Chapter on the move

by Patti Loizzo

When I accepted the position of president, I did so in hopes of returning the organization to the enthusiastic position it held when I first joined as a freshman. I wanted lots of student involvement and I wanted everyone to learn, enjoy and benefit from PRSSA.

My fellow officers have helped me greatly with their energy and support. We began with new ideas and plans that were developed in early summer, and it helped us attract more than 49 members this year, twice as many as in 1984-85.

With the help of professor Paul Morgan, each meeting involved workshops and professional speakers. Meetings were held every other week, with committees meeting more often.

We took on two public relations projects--PR for the Lady Topper's and the Fine Arts Festival. Those busy committee members gained experience in all aspects of public relations. The awards banquet committee

began its work last September. Members planned a very successful tenth year anniversary banquet that brought members, guests and alumni together for a special evening in mid-April.

In addition to local activities, several students attended the national convention in Denver, Colo., in October. We were happy to see our members return after four days of seminars and fun with the National Community Service award for the Bowling Green Magazine. The award is our chapter's sixth national award.

At the spring conference in Grand Rapids, Mich., our members collected three more awards. We received recognition in Chapter Development, Chapter Service, and I received the Outstanding Senior award.

Perhaps I am bragging, but this year our members and officers deserve a lot of praise. I'm proud of our achievements this year, and with the newly elected officers, I expect nothing less for our chapter in 1985-86.

Taking the ladies to the top

Helping Western's Lady Toppers "take off" was the goal of several chapter members this school year.

Western's PRSSA chapter coordinated game and pre-game promotions for the women's basketball team to increase game attendance and bring attention to the basketball program.

More than 9,000 fans attended the Bowling Green Bank Invitational Tournament, Nov. 19-20. The 15 committee members planned the "Lady Topper Tip Off," a pre-season pep rally, and promoted the tournament in radio and newspaper advertisements. Special promotions were geared to certain publics, with the emphasis on students.

Members also sold Lady Topper basketball cards, printed in a baseball-card format, and sold a poster of the "Lady Toppers on a Roll." The poster features the team gathered around a gambling table.

The Lady Toppers had the fourth highest national attendance record in 1983-84, with an average of 2,514 fans for games that weren't doubleheaders with the men's team. This year Coach Paul Sanderford and PRSSA members set as their goal breaking the national attendance record for women's basketball.

National figures were not available as we went to press, but Lady Topper attendance jumped dramatically to an average of 3,088 as the team rolled to a 28-6 record and a trip to the NCAA Final Four tournament in Austin, Texas.

Assisting the arts

PRSSA students began the fall semester by helping promote its Fine Arts Festival.

Students began working in August, sending press, radio and television releases throughout Kentucky and Tennessee to publicize each of the five events.

The festival featured the North Carolina Dance Theater, the Vienna Choir Boys, a baroque orchestra from England, the Asolo State Theater and pianist Janina Fialkowska during its 12th season.

Members of the festival committee sent letters to area high schools and civic leaders before each performance.

Although attendance was down slightly compared to previous years, the Vienna Choir Boy's concert was a sell out.

"The events of the Fine Arts Festival were outstanding; everyone who attended seemed to enjoy themselves," John Oakes, festival director, said. "We appreciated PRSSA's help."



Photo by Jane T. Massey
Paul Morgan, new PR professor, works in his office in Gordon Wilson Hall.

Moving to the top

The public relations department has moved to the top--Gordon Wilson Hall at the top of the hill.

This past summer the PR, journalism and advertising departments moved boxes, chairs, books and file cabinets up from Academic Complex. The PR department now shares the third floor with the advertising department.

"After working in a broom closet, being up here seems like a luxury, but we still have needs for more space and facilities," Dr. Robert Blann said. Blann is the faculty adviser for the Kelly Thompson Chapter of PRSSA.

The additional space includes larger rooms for public relations classes and an office for PRSSA.

"The move is timely as we approach accreditation," Blann said. "We are now scrutinizing our curriculum standards so we will be acceptable to the journalism education accrediting team in 1985-86."

New faculty member brings enthusiasm to teaching

Experience and enthusiasm are two qualities the new public relations instructor has in abundance.

Paul C. Morgan joined Western's staff this fall. He is the former director of Public Relations Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, and he directed PR studies at the University of Missouri for five years. His PRSSA programs won national awards at both schools.

Morgan also brings years of corporate experience to Western. His first corporate position was with Shell Oil. He was also an employee of Carl Byoir and Associates, Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation and the Bank of America.

Morgan, who turned down a consulting position in Atlanta to teach at Western, said he wasn't happy in the corporate setting.

"I personally needed more satisfaction," he said. "I like working with students--the personal involvement and the

openness in creativity and new ideas."

"Teaching is the greatest job in public relations. The sky's the limit with ideas," he added.

Morgan has definite ideas for the PR program and PRSSA at Western. "We can do twice as much" is his motto for the program.

"We have doubled the size of our PRSSA chapter, and we're going to compete for the outstanding national chapter in 1985-86.

"If we win that, this school will have won every national award at least once," Morgan said.

Morgan spent some of his time at the National Conference in Denver securing commitments from PR executives to participate in a PR workshop in March. His work with internships this year is already paying off for our members.

"I like the students and the faculty here. There's a good spirit," Morgan said.

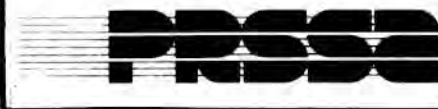
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Decade of growth

Alumni, professionals, students and parents enjoyed "Celebrating a Decade of Growth and Achievement" this spring at the tenth anniversary awards banquet April 14.

The Kelly Thompson Chapter is ten years old this spring, and banquet committee members invited several distinguished guests to help celebrate.

Bob Irvine, PR director for Humana, Inc., Louisville, received this year's Outstanding Professional award and spoke briefly to the gathering. Other award winners included the Western Kentucky Spirit Masters

for contributions to the university, Video Station and the Bowling Green Police Department for community service work involving missing children and 1982's Debbie Jones as the outstanding graduate.

In addition, \$1,500 in scholarship aid was presented, outstanding members were recognized and gifts were given to Dr. Robert Blann and Professor Paul Morgan. It was a special evening in honor of the chapter's tenth anniversary and reviewing an outstanding year in 1984-85.

Magazine wins national award

The Kelly Thompson chapter won its sixth national award last fall during the PRSSA conference in Denver, Colo.

The chapter received the Outstanding Community Service Award for the Bowling Green Magazine, a semi-annual city publication. The award is given to a chapter that benefits its community through voluntary activities.

The award was accepted by

chapter adviser, Dr. Robert Blann, Professor Paul Morgan and the six members who attended the conference. The awards ceremony ended the three-day conference, Oct. 14-17.

Western's PRSSA chapter has won three other community service awards, a chapter development award and a university service award since 1975.

Experience, education

from page 3

Sam Abell, of Wycliffe, Ky., said writing is important, but not the only important part of PR.

"Writing is important in public relations but certainly not the only thing to be learned at Western," Abell said.

"There's much more to be gotten out of a PR degree besides writing ability. PR is more than learning basic reporting, laying out a brochure or writing a PSA. It's all of the above plus an emphasis on people and their actions," he added.

Abell said that he thinks Spirit Masters requires the most PR work of all his jobs.

"I think they all take a lot of work but Spirit Masters is a PR unit here at Western. Its purpose is to portray, through its members, Western's image to the public. Being a Spirit Master is a full-time job," he said.

"The one thing I've learned from being involved in the PR end of an organization is leadership," Abell said. "Leadership is made up of management and communications skills, and student activities provide both of these."

PR Perspectives

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